



**State of Connecticut**  
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**Affairs Commission**

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**Testimony on Bills SB-383 and SB-446**

Orlando J. Rodriguez

Associate Legislative Analyst, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

Labor and Public Employees Committee, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Hartford, CT

Senator Holder-Winfield, Representative Tercyak, Senator Hwang, Representative Rutigliano, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee; my name is Orlando Rodriguez and I am an Associate Legislative Analyst with the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). LPRAC supports senate bills 383 and 446.

Domestic workers are often paid low wages and may not be protected by existing labor laws. SB-446 would make clear to all employers their responsibilities and the rights of their domestic workers in Connecticut. LPRAC would like domestic workers to be provided the following protections (among others) similar to New York's Domestic Workers Bill of Rights:

- The right to overtime pay at time-and-a-half after 40 hours of work in a week, or 44 hours for workers who live in their employer's home
- A day of rest (24 hours) every seven days, or overtime pay if they agree to work on that day
- Three paid days of rest each year after one year of work for the same employer
- The creation of a special cause of action for domestic workers who suffer sexual or racial harassment

In addition to New York, Hawaii, California and Massachusetts now have legislation protecting domestic workers.

The Great Recession in Connecticut was particularly difficult for Hispanic workers. While the unemployment rate for whites peaked at 7.5 percent in 2010, unemployment among Hispanics peaked at a dramatically higher 17.8 percent in 2011.<sup>1</sup> Currently, Connecticut has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest unemployment rate for Hispanics nationwide even as Hispanics will be needed to fill thousands of job openings created by Connecticut's retiring Baby Boomers.<sup>2</sup> It is vital for the state's economic future that Hispanic workers start entering the workforce now in large numbers to gain the skills for the workforce needs of Connecticut businesses. SB-383 will increase the availability of jobs for Latino residents of Connecticut. Furthermore, we recommend that the pool of state funds subject to the Minority Business Enterprises set aside be expanded by \$650 million by including state grants to municipalities and state grants for school building projects.

We thank this commission for the opportunity to comment on these two bills, which are of great importance to Latinos in Connecticut.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ctvoices.org/sites/default/files/econ14workingct.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> ACS 2013 1-yr table S2301.